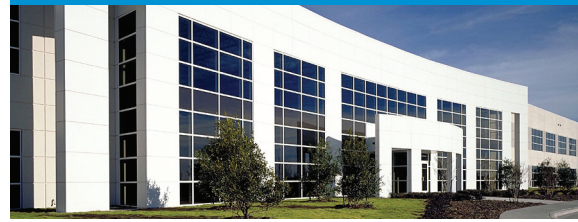




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—Cindy Bordas, Director of Business Systems



IDI improves development collaboration with WebEx.



INDUSTRY Real Estate

WEBEX APPLICATIONS WebEx Meeting Center

SUMMARY

With clients, contractors, and staff members located in major cities throughout the US, IDI needed to find a way to streamline communications and collaborate more effectively. IDI adopted WebEx Meeting Center and uses the solution for weekly client and monthly project approval meetings, as well as to facilitate communication between regional offices and headquarters. As a result, IDI significantly reduced its “carbon footprint” while improving productivity and strengthening client relationships.

ABOUT INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENTS INTERNATIONAL, INC.

- **Line of Business**
Industrial Real Estate Development
- **Headquarters**
Atlanta, GA
- **Number of Employees**
205
- **Target Market**
Large retail and other enterprises
- **WebEx Customer Since 2003**

Founded in 1989, IDI is a full-service industrial real estate developer that builds and leases large-scale facilities such as warehouses, distribution centers, and light-manufacturing operations, throughout North America. Consistently ranked among the top companies in its category, the company serves high-profile clients such as Circuit City, HP, Home Depot, Kraft Foods, Office Depot, and UPS.

The Challenge

With clients, management, and staff scattered across US locations, Industrial Developments International (IDI) needed to find a better way to bridge physical distances and make the most effective use of time. To conduct weekly project status meetings with clients, internal project reviews, and ad hoc collaborative sessions, the company relied on conference calls, sharing information with meeting attendees via fax and email. “Before we implemented WebEx Meeting Center, our weekly client meetings tended to lose focus easily,” notes Cindy Bordas, Director of Business Systems at IDI. “Because real estate development is a visual field, architects, development managers, and engineers all need to see diagrams, maps, and photographs. Yet, each person often had different versions. We wasted a lot of time sending documents and photos back and forth to get everybody on the same page.”

In addition, the company's CEO was committed to reducing IDI's “carbon footprint”—the greenhouse gas impact its activities have on the environment—through curtailing business travel. “The head of our National Development Group had attended a web-based meeting and was really impressed with it.

The Solution

Bordas began to research web-based meeting solutions in 2003. She looked closely at WebEx and Microsoft Live Meeting. After evaluating features, reliability, and responsiveness of both solutions, IDI chose WebEx Meeting Center. “We were very impressed with the track record and market leadership of WebEx,” Bordas comments. “Our WebEx salesperson was very responsive every step of the way.”

IDI first used the WebEx solution for weekly client meetings. In these sessions, clients, contractors, development managers, and staff review the progress of major projects, and collaborate on addressing unforeseen issues, improving facilities design, and controlling costs. “These meetings often last as long as two hours,” says Bordas, “because so many details require attention. Before implementing WebEx Meeting Center our meetings were labor intensive. Now participants use WebEx Meeting Center interactive features to ‘chat,’ work on a virtual white board, or alter drawings in real time.”

The company uses WebEx Meeting Center for monthly project approval meetings. During these gatherings, final approval is given to multiple “inventory” projects in which IDI develops facilities at its master-planned business parks and leases those buildings. To receive budget approval, each regional office must present a detailed project package including demographics, site and building plans, maps, and budget information.

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“Members of the IDI board simply launch WebEx to review the materials, using annotation and pointer tools to explain and make changes that everyone agrees to in real time. WebEx enables us to manipulate huge files, including aerial photos and CAD drawings, with zero latency,” says Bordas.

As time goes on, more IDI groups are discovering the value of WebEx Meeting Center, especially for ad hoc meetings. IDI's Vice President of Finance uses WebEx Meeting Center for impromptu meetings where he reviews project figures with staff members, revises calculations, and presents alternative financing approaches on the white board. “Other IDI groups are stepping forward,” says Bordas. “For example, the graphics specialist in our Corporate Communications Department creates custom maps. If someone wants to reposition an office park road, she launches a WebEx meeting, shares her Adobe application, and works with regional managers to make the changes they request on the fly.” Finally, IDI's IT department uses WebEx Meeting Center to troubleshoot technical issues. “If we're having a system problem, we contact our vendor's technical support department and replicate the problem in real time, reaching a resolution much faster than ever before,” Bordas remarks.

The Benefits

WebEx Meeting Center enabled IDI to optimize resources, improving productivity while supporting the company's environmental initiatives. “Because our board members now conduct project review meetings with WebEx,” remarks Bordas, “they quickly return to other important activities. In the past, they would download project documents from our website and fly to Atlanta, which consumed at least two days. By optimizing our valuable resources, WebEx enabled us to improve time management and increase productivity.” WebEx has also helped the company save on operation, environmental, and opportunity costs. “In this era of high gasoline prices, WebEx made it possible for us to reduce expensive travel dramatically and support our company's ‘green’ initiative simultaneously,” Bordas says.

WebEx has also improved inter-company and client communication, resulting in better collaboration and fostering a strong sense of involvement. According to Bordas, “With WebEx, our weekly meetings go much more smoothly now that everyone references the same information. We keep our clients informed at all stages of the development cycle, which means much better working relationships.” Internally, WebEx Meeting Center facilitates company-wide meetings. “Employees in all regions log in from their desktops, listen to our CEO's presentations, ask questions, and receive prompt on-line responses.

WebEx Meeting Center streamlines project review and approval processes, enabling all players to focus on the tasks at hand and reach better decisions faster. “WebEx Meeting Center offers us a robust alternative to face-to-face meetings,” notes Bordas. “We usually have 20 projects in the pipeline at a time and manage them with a proprietary project management system. Using WebEx, all players easily conduct reviews of each project simultaneously, expediting mutual decision-making. WebEx ensures we keep our multi-million dollar projects moving forward efficiently.”

The Future

As IDI continues to engage in more international projects, it plans to expand its use of WebEx for projects in Mexico and Canada. The company also plans to continue to leverage WebEx functionality. “We love the power of WebEx,” says Bordas. “It lets us respond quickly to business opportunities and challenges. All in all, we've found a solution that will grow with us and meet our needs going forward.”

HIGHLIGHTS

- WebEx Meeting Center enabled IDI to optimize resources, improving productivity while supporting the company's environmental initiatives.
- WebEx improved inter-company and client communication, resulting in better collaboration and working relationships.
- WebEx Meeting Center streamlines IDI processes, enabling all players to reach better decisions faster.